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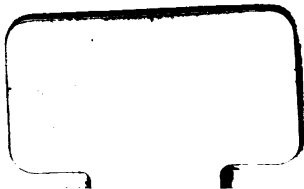
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PHEUS
AND
OTHER POEMS

BY
E. B. BROWNLOW

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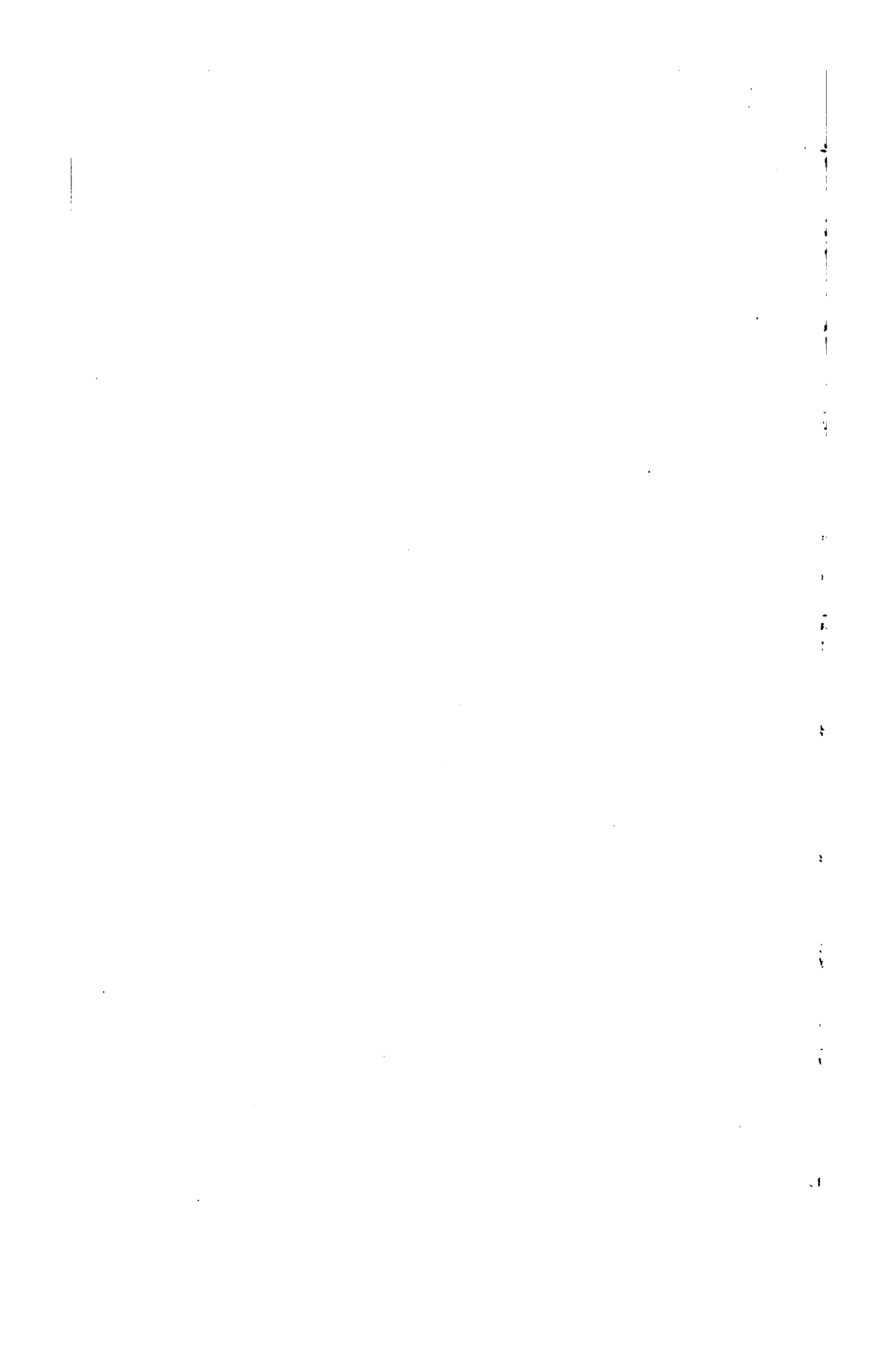
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ORPHEUS

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

EDWARD BURROUGH BROWNLOW.

(SAREPTA.)

PUBLISHED BY

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MONTREAL.

1896.

Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the Year 1896, by
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THESE POEMS

ARE NOW COLLECTED AND PUBLISHED

IN MEMORY OF

EDWARD BURROUGH BROWNLOW,

BORN IN LONDON, ENGLAND,

27 NOVEMBER, 1857,

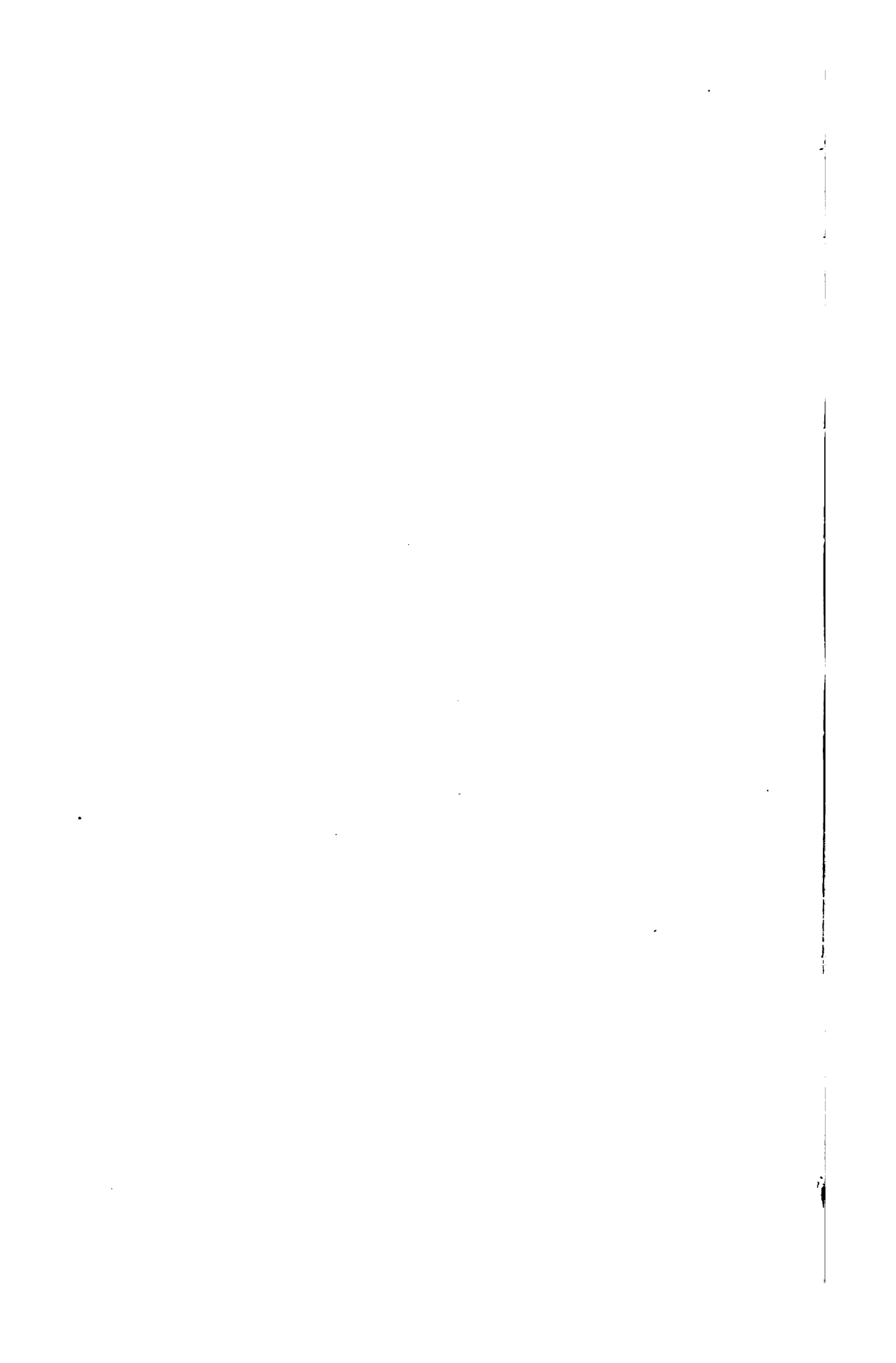
DIED IN MONTREAL, CANADA,

8 SEPTEMBER, 1895,

BY

HIS FELLOW-MEMBERS OF

THE PEN AND PENCIL CLUB.



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ORPHEUS AND OTHER POEMS.

Printed by D. BENTLEY & Co.
At Montreal, Canada, this First day of May,
A.D. 1896.

ORPHEUS.

Unto the realm of Pluto many roads
Lead with dark winding from the bright abodes
Of men, and when life's last detaining thread
Is cut by Iris, and the body, dead,
With Charon's coin in palm, rests in the tomb.
Or on the pyre, the dæmon of its doom
After much pitiful forbearance tears
The soul from its environment of cares
With promise sweet of love's awaiting kiss,
Of old friends greeting, and much holy bliss
On shores Elysian, where all ways are peace,
And all existence virtue without cease ;
But ere the fields of Asphodel are won
Dire labours manifold must first be done
By soul and dæmon.

All the paths descend
To four great streams, whose turgid waters blend
With suffering souls : here flows sad Acheron
On whose black banks impatient spirits run
And call to that grim boatman, ferrying o'er
His last embarker to the nether shore
In silence, bent with duty's measured pull,
Certain of all to follow ; there, too, full
Of awful lamentations from lost souls
Cocytus its fierce waves of sorrow rolls
Wherein dwells one whose face is only seen—

Above the surface, human and serene,
 Below, her horrid serpent-form encoils
 And stings the hapless spirits in her toils
 With scorpion venom ; Phlegethon rolls by
 Flaming with waves that hiss, and mount on high
 To lick with burning tongue each crusted shore
 Where not the vilest weed dare clamber o'er,
 There swim huge salamanders, whose desire
 Grows with the maddening tumult of the fire ;
 And lastly, Styx, that pool of pitchy slime
 Whereby the great gods swear their vows sublime,
 In whose black channel hatred finds a home,
 And breeds with fury many a plague-born gnome
 Loathsome to gods and men.

These rivers run
 Far to the West, beyond the sinking sun,
 Beyond old Ocean's limits, past the range
 Of starry travel or where comets strange
 Rush in hot madness ; there too Lethe flows
 Where souls must drink to gain the sweet repose
 Of all-forgetfulness, before the Fates
 Lose power to plague them, or their bygone states
 Haunt them like ghosts.

These waters safely crossed,
 The plains beneath thick filled with spirits lost,
 Avernus meets the view, vast, horrid lake
 At Hades' entrance ; who its waters take,

Sicken and die in torture that must rend
 With endless tooth, for such death has no end.
 Beyond Avernus stands the gate of Hell,
 With Cerberus to guard its portals well.

Unto that gate came Orpheus with his lute
 Whose most melodious music had made mute
 The wailing souls on Acheron's sad shore,
 And charmed old Charon, as he ferried o'er
 The son of great Apollo in his quest
 For her whom of all women he loved best,
 And as he came fierce Cerberus stood still
 Fixed by the magic of the player's skill :
 On Orpheus went and played, for he knew well
 The wondrous potency of this great spell
 Would by a pause be broken, and his fate
 Never to pass alive the solemn gate ;
 He roused the Harpies, those most fearful things
 With heads and breasts of women and the wings
 Of birds, and talons of the lion fierce,
 Whose breath is poison and whose venoms pierce
 Deep in man's soul—the hags were planning then
 Foul plots for planting grief in hearts of men ;
 He stayed stern Nemesis, now poised for flight
 As she in darkness left her mother Night ;
 The three great judges of the soul now paused
 In giving sentence, for the music caused
 Minos and Æacus and Rhadamanthus think

What change the gods had wrought, that at the brink
 Of Tartarus such heavenly sounds should rise
 To make the heart uleap and to the eyes
 Communicate swift tears of sudden joy—
 Had Jupiter grown mad to let this boy,
 This gold-haired stripling with the silver strings
 Enter dark Hades with such sound that brings
 Pity to their stern breasts?

The Gorgons stare

In vain at Orpheus through their viper-hair,
 He sings and heeds them not, and he alone
 Looks at them, eye for eye, and not to stone
 Is turned; the Lemures, that spectral swarm,
 That fill the space of Hades without form,
 Halt in their wanderings to hear the notes
 That fall as from a thousand song-birds' throats.
 Pale Death sits sharpening her dart and hears
 With sad dismay the sound that soothes her ears,
 Her arm grows powerless—the black dart falls
 With echoing clang on Hades' marbled halls;
 The triple sisters who turn mad the mind
 With envy, rage, and hatred, and make blind
 The heart with judgment false, hear the high strains,
 And knowledge of lost joy o'erwhelms their brains;
 Triptolemus stands still with bated breath
 While on his way to that great hall of death
 Where his stern fellow judges sit aghast
 Still pondering on Orpheus.

Now he passed

Poor Marsyas, whose love of music great
 Lured him to challenge for his after-fate
 The laurel-crowned Apollo and his lyre,
 Wherefore he stayed in the eternal fire ;
 But Orpheus, passing, played so wondrous well
 That all the flames about him flickered, fell,
 And left the wretch in peace to hear once more
 The power of sound he staked his spirit for.
 Black Discord in her den of hideous noise
 Grew sudden silent, and her breast with joys
 Filled, as the gentle tremblings of the lute
 Found subtle ways to reach her.

Resolute

Strode Orpheus on his path, and to the right
 Stood Sisyphus, the stone just at the height
 Of the great mountain, ready to roll again
 Into the vale beneath, but that sweet strain
 Held it in place so long as it could reach
 The spot it rested on—and to beseech
 Eternal playing, Sisyphus held high
 Tired arms to Jove as Orpheus passed him by ;
 There to the left Ixion ceased to feel
 The endless revolutions of the wheel
 Over the flaming river, and the fangs
 Of serpents leave him as he, listless, hangs
 Listening to such sweet music.

Now the lake
Whose tempting waters Tantalus forsake
When his parched lips and maddened hands would take
Of their cool touch relief, hears the new sound
And Tantalus with surfeit is near drowned
For this brief respite, and with hungry clutch
Plucks tender fruits before he could not touch,
Eating in joyous wonder that Hell's God
Gave him such feasting for a period.
Now Orpheus passed the black, oblivious lair
Of Sleep, a cave devoid of light or air,
Paved with strange shapes and horrid phantasies
Inanimate and senseless, and they rise,
As through the cave's dark mouth the music sweet
Fills to the inmost parts that foul retreat,
Crying for air to breathe and light to see
The wondrous worker of such harmony.
Pluto's high throne within the distance looms,
Built of the gold and marble of men's tombs
Upon a base of bones, and by its side
Stood the pale throne of his beloved bride,
Persephone.—Behind her shadowy seat
Shone one blue star and at its cloud-hid feet
Glared the red oval of the waning moon
That tells sage shepherds of a storm in June
When flocks grow restless.—When the player came
Nearer to that great place a sudden flame
Shot from the silent air, and blazed as fierce

As though a thousand lightning strokes would pierce
 In one vast sheet of overwhelming fire
 The daring mortal who would thus aspire
 To reach great Plato's love-shrine ;—in the blaze
 Millions of serpents writhe, but Orpheus plays
 Heedless of all, nor dares to cease lest he
 Lose the safe conduct of his minstrelsy.
 Unharmed he passes through the floods of flame
 That would arrest his progress, and he came
 Unharmed beyond them.

Lo ! before his eyes

A scene of wondrous beauty did arise ;
 Such as a poet sees when every sense
 Leaves its abode, and the intelligence
 Of soul usurps the functions of the mind,
 When unto every object he grows blind
 Seeing through all beyond.

For Pluto's throne

Is more magnificent than Love might own
 In higher regions. Orpheus stood beneath
 The lowest step thereof ; a flowery wreath
 Crowned his bright golden locks—the flowers
 Plucked from the dew-fed meadows and fair bowers
 Where he had wandered with his beauteous bride
 In happy love-quests, ere that eventide
 When he was wakened by the short, sharp cry
 Calling his name, and saw a snake glide by

Into the thicket—when he saw the breast
 That oft had made his head a pillowy rest
 Marked with the fatal venom, which his lips,
 Used to the honey that the love-bee sips,
 Closed on in vain endeavor to remove
 The sentence of the gods on their sweet love—
 When his strong hands clutched madly the thin air
 As unto Jove he poured his soul's deep prayer
 For pity—when, with all his blood turned lead,
 He looked and saw Eurydice was dead,
 And when 'gainst all the gods he took that oath
 Sacred to her, Death's awful bridal troth,
 That by the power of music's magic spell
 Against their will he would go down to Hell
 And rescue his lost love. Whereat Jove laughed
 And said to Bacchus as they gaily quaffed
 In high carousal : “ Let the fool take care,
 Pluto can mind his own. Once in the lair
 Of Hades, e'en Apollo's son must stay,
 No goats from that black fold can ever stray.”

Thus Orpheus stood ; but now no longer mute,
 For to the rich-wrought tremblings of his lute
 He raised his rare-heard voice and stilled the word
 On Pluto's lips, and then all Hades heard :—

Persephone ! Persephone !
 Give back my lost delight to me !
 By thy great love for thy great lord,
 By each sweet thought for him adored,
 By love that thrills and love that fills
 Thy heart as with a thousand rills
 Of joy, break down his frozen breast
 And lull his vengeful mood to rest,
 Till mighty Pluto joyfully
 Shall, from his very love for thee,
 Give back my soul's delight to me—
 Eurydice ! Eurydice !

Persephone ! Persephone !
 Recall thy lord's great love for thee,
 When in sweet Enna's golden meads
 Thou heard'st that rustling of the reeds,
 And in thy hands the love-crushed flowers
 Were grasped with fear, as from earth's bowers
 He strained thee to his mighty breast,
 And bore thee, senseless, to the West
 Beyond the opalescent sea
 That nightly sings its song of thee ;
 Give back my soul's delight to me—
 Eurydice ! Eurydice !

Persephone ! Persephone !
 I bring love's garland unto thee :—
 She made it with her loving hands,
 She plaited it in golden bands,
 And placed it on my chosen brow
 When by my side she sat, as now
 Thou sittest by thy great lord's side :
 That night no lover snatched his bride,
 But Death seized all remorselessly,
 And took her soul beyond the sea ;
 And life became a memory—
 Eurydice ! Eurydice !

Persephone ! Persephone !
 Let this lute's magic minstrelsy
 Find with love's music, sweet and clear,
 Thy heart-depths through each pearly ear :
 Behold ! how when I strike one string
 The lone sound floats with cheerless ring ;
 Behold ! when double chords are driven,
 With harmony the air is riven ;
 So Fate plays on our souls, and we
 Yield plaints of love or misery ;
 Give back my soul's delight to me—
 Eurydice ! Eurydice !

Persephone ! Persephone !
 By all the joy that lovers see
 When first they feel the hidden fire
 Burst forth in blaze of heart's desire,
 By all the music lovers hear
 When language laps against the ear,
 Like crystal waves on golden sands,
 By touch of lips and clasp of hands
 When long-zoned raiments are made free,
 By all love's sweets that fell to thee ;
 Give back my soul's delight to me—
 Eurydice ! Eurydice !

Persephone ! Persephone !
 Mark how thy lord yet frowns on me,
 Behold the tightening of his lip—
 Kiss—kiss his mouth lest there may slip
 One word of doom to dash my hope ;
 Bend down on him thine eyes and cope
 With love the gleams that in them shine,
 The while I summon to me, mine ;
 Break —break—by love and memory
 The bond of Hades, set me free
 Her soul, that is the soul of me—
 Eurydice ! Eurydice !

Persephone ! Persephone !
 Clasp him so close he may not see ;
 Look deep into his soul with love
 That from thine eyes he shall not move
 His own ;—ah ! thus I gazed on her
 That night and heard no serpent stir,
 For love, once thralling all the mind,
 Makes all the little senses blind ;
 'Tis well ! he drinks love's alchemy !
 Where'er in Hades thou may'st be—
 Come back ! my love ! come back to me,
 Eurydice ! Eurydice !

Persephone ! Persephone !
 Lull him with love that unto me
 No thought may leap with sudden ire,
 And steal again my heart's desire
 When she shall come. Ye Gods ! that light !
 It shone when on that fatal night
 The dæmons took her from my side ;—
 'Tis she ! they bring her back ! my bride !
 Let Pluto wake—let Jove decree—
 My self—my soul—come back to me
 My joy in life and death to be—
 Eurydice ! Eurydice !

Persephone ! Persephone !
A moment more and we are free ;
I feel the breath of outer air,
I see the upper stars so fair,
 I hear the lapping of salt waves,
 I see the light of day that saves,
 I feel the pulsing heart-throbs run
 Through her fair limbs, I watch the sun
Uprising in her eyes—and see !
Its living light thrills into me ;
She has come back ! come back to me—
 Eurydice ! Eurydice !

DEAD SUMMER.

The lord and lover of the year is slain,
Fair Summer ! Nature's joy and earth's sweet pride.
The wind mourns sadly as a mournful bride
Loading the air with monodies of pain ;
Down from the branches rustle, light as rain,
The rarely-coloured leaves ; afar and wide
Blight-stricken blossoms strew the country-side,
No more to deck it with delight again ;
The bright winged choristers that carolled round
Sweet overflowings of supernal joy,
No more their thrilling ecstasies employ
To glad man's soul with music's purest sound ;
Summer lies dead upon the lap of earth,
Pale melancholy weeps where late laughed mirth.

AUTUMN.

When Autumn, like a prophet filled with fears,
Warns Summer's golden beauty of that death
Which soon the chilling blast of Winter's breath
Shall bring ; fond Nature by her falling tears
Attests her grief unchanged through all the years,
And from the blossoms that lie dead beneath
Seizing the unseen colours, weaves a wreath,
And lo ! a garland on each tree appears.
So, when to thee life's end is drawing near
And weeping kinsmen kneel about thy bed
May all the rays of goodness thou hast shed
From out the buried past shine bright and clear,
And golden deeds and thoughts of heavenly hues
Over thy fading mind soft light diffuse.

THE SKY-LARK.

Blithe is the lark when first the morning breaks,
And from his nest up-circling through the air
He leaves below a world of shadowy care,
And off his wings the dew of darkness shakes ;
For those high lakes of blue he gladly makes,
With song that overfloweth everywhere
Like the sweet grace that falleth after prayer
To one who from sin's sleep at last awakes.
Poets have sung thy praises ;—but thy song
Is far above all sound of poet's voice,
Though listening to thy notes he may rejoice,
And wonder if some raptured angel-throng
Pause in their service as thou soarest near,
And to thy music lend entranced ear.

CONSTANCY.

I did not ask thy love nor tell mine own
When others sought thee in thy sovereign days,
For my sad heart, beholding the bright blaze
Of thy great beauty, seemed to turn to stone,
And on my lips that now have bolder grown,
No word would form to utter thy high praise ;
So stricken was I in love's conquering ways
That my poor soul consumed its love alone.

Vindictive time now veils thy queen-like charms
To thy old champions, and they quickly leave,
As grim misfortune comes to cross their arms
And pluck thy colours from each coward sleeve,
All fly the tilt-yard. Now to Fate's alarms
I fling my gage at last. Wilt thou believe ?

A BALLADE OF THE STREET.

High clamour of rooks o'er a meadow of clover
That make for their haunts at the break of the day ;
Low babble of brooks where the rain-spotted plover
Paddles at noon through the sand-banks grey ;
Gold-banded bees on their murmuring way
To the honey-filled blossoms that yield their sweet—
These are the visions that round us play
As we steer through the turbulent throng of the street.

Slow pacing of herds and the song of the drover ;
A score of clean sails in a Kentish bay,
With a glimpse of the castle and cliffs of Dover,
And the girdle of sea that shall gleam away ;
Far off in the fields where they make the hay
Darby and Dorothy manage to meet,
And kiss for a moment—alack-a-day !
As we steer through the turbulent throng of the street.

Across the wide world Love is ever a rover,
In palace or cot not content to stay .
Soon the pastoral play of our youth is over
With its spangles of hope and its fine array.
June stifles the flowers that are born in May,
And their beauties the autumn shall not repeat ;
Our fancies the Fates try to strangle and slay—
As we steer through the turbulent throng of the street.

Let us heed not the passers or what they say,
While Love in our hearts finds a safe retreat,
For souls can reach Heaven, though feet may stray
As they steer through the turbulent throng of the street.

THE BLUSH.

Within my heart there fell a hush,
I thought my very soul had died,
When first I saw my lady blush
And own the love she strove to hide.

I thought my very soul had died
Before affection bade her speak,
And own the love she strove to hide
With silent ways and manners meek.

Before affection bade her speak,
I watched her as she used to go
With silent ways and manners meek,
Whilst I with love was all aglow.

I watched her as she used to go
To gather simple blossoms fair,
Whilst I with love was all aglow
Yet dared not lay my passion bare.

To gather simple blossoms fair
I often went—to give to her,
Yet dared not lay my passion bare
Though all my soul with love did stir.

I often went to give to her
My life if she would deign to take,
Though all my soul with love did stir
My lips their silence dared not break.

My life if she would deign to take
'Twas her's, not mine—yet strange to tell
My lips their silence dared not break,
Ere she had learned love's sacred spell.

'Twas her's, not mine—yet strange to tell
Moons waxed and waned and years flew by,
Ere she had learned love's sacred spell
By touch of hand and glance of eye.

Moons waxed and waned and years flew by,
I thought she loved, alas! not me;
By touch of hand and glance of eye
The truth was told—ah! ecstasy!

I thought she loved, alas! not me—
Within my heart there fell a hush,
The truth was told ah! ecstasy!
When first I saw my lady blush.

THE RONDEAU.

First find your refrain—then build as you go
 With delicate touch, neither heavy nor slow,
 But dainty and light as a gossamer thread,
 Or the fleecy white cloud that is breaking o'erhead,
 Or the sea-foam that curls in the soft evening glow ;
 And your rhyme must be swinging—not all in a row,
 But as waves on the sands in fine ebb and quick flow ;
 Yet of rules for a rondeau I hold this the head—
 First find your refrain.

For the subject—there's nothing above or below,
 That a poet can learn or a critic may know,
 But a rondeau will hold a rhyme-ring that will wed
 The thought to the thing ; yet whatever is said
 Will ne'er be a rondeau till you with one blow—
 First find your refrain.

WINTER.

Winter's blast is coldly sweeping
O'er the pallid face of earth ;
All the merry elves are sleeping,
Wearied out with last year's mirth ;
Dismal spirits doomed to wander,
Never resting anywhere,
Chase the sparkling crystals yonder
Through the chill and cheerless air ;
Where the birds sang in the branches
Not a sound is heard at all ;
Snowy flakes in avalanches
Flutter down with silent fall ;
Where the grasses nursed the flowers
Not a sign of life is seen
And the frost has turned the showers
Into sheets of icy sheen ;
All the air is sadly sighing,
All the trees with sorrows ring ;
All is dying—dying—dying
Winter—go ! come back, O Spring.

PURPOSE.

Brother! awake from thy long lethargy ;
Walk forth into the world, search out the task
That is allotted thee ; tear off the mask
Of morbid thought that ever blindeth thee.
God hath appointed each good man to be
His warrior in the righteous fray ; then ask
His benison, and, donning sword and casque,
March forth to meet the common enemy.
Each good deed done shall be a death-blow given
Unto a sin conceived ; each true word said
Shall be a javelin that hath not sped
In vain—its force doth come direct from Heaven.
Waste not the time ; man's inmost spirit saith
“ Life without purpose is a lingering death.”

SONNET.

Year after year I see the trees unfold
 Their baby leaves to the maturing sun ;
 Then tender birth of blossoms, one by one,
From parent stems that still their nurture hold ;
Later the tall green corn takes on its gold,
 Crowned with the glory of a purpose done ;
 And last, the sands of beauty being run,
All things decline into the common mould.
Age after age whirls on the appointed round
 Of mortal destiny ; old thoughts take bloom ;
 And new minds battle in the time-worn strife,
Death's winter nips before the task is crowned,
 And, soon or late, within oblivion's tomb
 Men fall like leaves from God's great tree of life.

A ROMAN GIRL'S PRAYER.

On thy grassy altar, dear,
 Pour I out the two-year wine,
 And the incense rises clear
 From thy holy shrine.

Lend me Venus, both thine ears ;
 Let me whisper unto thee
 All the hopes and all the fears
 Raging now in me.

He whom I have loved so well—
 For whose love my soul hath burned,
 Yields to Chloe's fatal spell
 And my vows hath spurned.

On her beauty now his eyes
 Beam as once they beamed on mine—
 Broken are the solemn ties
 Made beneath the vine.

It cannot be that he is born
 All my joy to turn to grief,
 For if he do prove forsworn—
 Death is my relief.

Mother Venus, look with smiles,
 Lest I lose this joy of love :
 Lend me all thy wit and wiles
 His cold heart to move.

Bless this philtre I prepare
 From the swift and sweet vervain ;
 Mother Venus, hear my prayer—
 Lead him back again !

A BALLADE OF BOCCACCIO.

The length of each day to make short
 And friendship to bind by a chain,
 Our Queen was appointed to reign
 In the realm of a leafy resort.
 Strong laws did her ruling support
 If need were her wish to maintain ;
 Though none could Love's presence profane
 When Philomel governed the court.

How fine did our gallants disport
 With ladies who followed the train,
 Whilst wisdom enlightened each brain
 In the wit of each ready retort.
 Ah! those were the days of fair sport
 The world ne'er will witness again,
 For Honour her rights did retain
 When Philomel governed the Court.

What stories our souls did transport
 O'er the beauties of Fancy's domain,
 And their morals and meanings were plain,
 Though your critics now try to distort.
 When Beauty and Truth do consort,
 Hypocrisy preacheth in vain,
 And Scandal and Slander were slain
 When Philomel governed the Court.

Ye moderns, who fight, might and main,
 For Mammon, believe this report,
 Men lived in their castles in Spain
 When Philomel governed the Court.

RELEASE.

He fears to die who knows not how to live,
For Death is friendly, shaping to an end
The woeful accidents which fate doth blend
With high success, to fairer fortunes give ;
Who for this close would ask alternative
Unto a further lease of earth to lend
His soul, and clip the wings that would ascend
To God, the source of life infinitive ?
Look at the parable of things—the sun
Must some day out—the fairest blossoms die—
Sweet-throated songsters cease their minstrelsy—
And Nature endeth all she hath begun.
So fear ye not to meet the great release,
For direst storms dissolve in lasting peace.

THE WHIP-POOR-WILL !

When early shades of evening's close
 The air with solemn darkness fill,
 Before the moonlight softly throws
 Its fairy mantle o'er the hill,
 A sad sound goes
 In plaintive thrill ;
 Who hears it knows
 The Whip-poor-will.

The Nightingale unto the rose
 Its tale of love may fondly trill ;
 No love-tale this—'tis grief that flows
 With pain that never can be still,
 The sad sound goes
 In plaintive thrill ;
 Who hears it knows
 The Whip-poor-will.

Repeated oft, it never grows
 Familiar ; but is sadder still,
 As though a spirit sought repose
 From some pursuing, endless ill,
 The sad sound goes
 In plaintive thrill ;
 Who hears it knows
 The Whip-poor-will.

THE DEATH OF THE LAUREATE.

Weep, England, weep ! if thou hast tears to shed—
Thy master-son of song has passed away ;
The Arthur of thy poets far has sped,
As the long-toiling light fades out of day
Into an unseen land ; no later lay,
To cheer thy heart and make thy soul more strong,
Shall sound within thy walls of sea-girt gray,
From the rare voice of him who gave so long
The noblest numbers of new English song.

Around the world the echoes of that song
Swiftly rebound, all English hearts to fill,
And o'er each peak of empire speed along
In roseate splendour, as the sudden thrill
Of sunrise tips with beauty each new hill ;
From east and west the glory of his fame
Rolls back to Albion's shores, and ever will—
For east and west can show no poet's name
More true and pure, more free from blot and shame.

He died in dear old England— in the land
Where Chaucer first sang tales of jovial cheer ;
Where Spenser chanted forth his pæans grand,
And Shakespeare left a word supreme and clear ;
Where Milton bade the epic reappear,
And Wordsworth, later, gained a deathless name ;
With these great five, this memorable year
Has yielded Tennyson, for future fame
The sixth true English poet to acclaim.

The moon streamed through the lattice where he lay,
In that last struggle of the living powers,
And round his brow her glory 'gan to play,
As when he wooed her in sweet English bowers,
'Midst silent birds and open-hearted flowers,
Till scenes of old-time beauty through his brain
Before him passed ; thus kindly death endowers
The last sad moments, lulling them from pain,
And memory brings her sweetest stores again.

THE SONNET.

The sonnet is a diamond flashing round
From every facet true rare colored lights ;
A gem of thought carved in poetic nights
To grace the brow of art by fancy crowned ;
A miniature of soul wherein are found
Marvels of beauty and resplendent sights ;
A drop of blood with which a lover writes
His heart's sad epitaph in its own bound ;
A pearl gained from dark waters when the deep
Rocked in its frenzied passion ; the last note
Heard from a heaven-saluting skylark's throat ;
A cascade small flung in a canyon steep
With crystal music. At this shrine of song
High priests of poesy have worshipped long.

THE POET.

Men call him mad because he weaves
 The glory of the golden corn
 And paints the beauty of the sheaves
 They gather night and morn.

They laugh when he in rhapsody,
 With eye uplift and soul serene,
 Translates the wonders of the sky
 Which they have dimly seen.

Or if he pluck a wayside flower
 And tell them of its beauty rare,
 They smile, not knowing God's great power
 Is manifested there.

Or if when tempests rule the sky
 He walk and talk with wind and rain,
 They call his soul's great ecstasy
 A sickness of the brain.

He walks unrecognized of men,
 For sense may not discern the soul ;
 The morrow's wonders of his pen
 Their sympathies control.

Along the battle-field of life,
Content to lose if others gain,
He lifts no finger in the strife,
Yet feels its bitter pain.

He wanders through the crowded street,
Or lingers by the country side,
For all things good his heart doth beat
With love that is world-wide.

The troubles of his fellow men
He shrines with pity in heart,
And prays the time to hasten when
All sorrow shall depart.

And when the kindly voice of Death
Proclaims life's journey duly trod,
He blesses all with parting breath
And leaves the rest to God.

IN BŒOTIA.

Vine tendrils drooping in the mid-day sun
Take me to Greece, ere Sappho sang those lays,
Whose echoes, falling down this length of days,
Trance us with beauty, sweet and halcyon ;
Satyrs, green-garlanded, skip madly on
Through woody wilds, loud shouts of ribald praise
Mingle with merry laughter, and amaze
The peaceful shepherds, who, affrighted, run ;
Fair dryads swell the riot-filling song
From every tree trunk, and from each pure spring
Sweet naiad voices rise with silvery ring
To welcome him who leads the dancing throng,
Old Bacchus ! reeling 'neath the weight of wine,
Chanting a stave, half drunken, half divine.

LOVE-LAND.

Ah ! Jenny ! though life is not over,
 Yet the sweetness of living is past ;
 No longer we walk through the clover
 And watch the white clouds sailing fast ;
 For a darkness has newly arisen
 To spread and to spoil our fair sky,
 All our days must be spent in a prison
 And the black cloud shall never pass by.

Ah ! Jenny ! though bright the scales glitter,
 In the midst of the coil lurks a fang,
 The fruit of the almond is bitter
 Though the blossoms are fair while they hang ;
 The rose has a canker within it,
 And some day the lark will not sing,
 The year that flew by as a minute
 Shall bear heavy on Love's broken wing.

Ah ! Jenny ! our play-book lies broken
 Behind us ;—before is the page
 Hermetic ;—and so for a token
 To charm away grief in our age
 Remember the words of Creation,
 Our " Let there be Love," when Love's fire
 Through our lips like a sacred libation
 Drenched our souls with the wine of desire.

Ah ! Jenny ! we journeyed together
Life's road for a year and a day,
Bright summer has been all our weather,
Fair blossoms have strewn all our way ;
And shall we now part at the corner
Of the cross-roads and meet nevermore,
Because the world leers like a scorner
And mocks when we pass by its door ?

Ah ! Jenny ! the hand that I gave you
That night when I promised to keep
Your heart—lo ! I stretch out to save you
And to save my own soul from Hell's deep ;
Let the world say its worst ;—we shall never
Hear its voice or see aught of its gloom,
For in Love-land the birds sing forever
And the roses are always in bloom.

THE LEGENDS AND LILIES OF FRANCE.

Sad and soft is the dirge on the Gallic shore
 By the mournful moan of the ocean made
 For the days and the deeds that are now no more
 'Ere the last of the Knights in his tomb was laid
 In the depth of an old cathedral's shade ;
 Above are his casque, shield, banner and lance
 With the sword that had struck him the accolade ;
 But dead are the legends and lillies of France.

Did he pine for the powder and polished floor,
 Gay dances, bright glances of masquerade ?
 When he parleyed of politics, was it not o'er
 The lightning-blue gleam of his Damascene blade ?
 If he sang, was it not of an old Crusade ?
 If he listened and laughed at a love romance,
 Would he rather not look at a carronade ?
 But dead are the legends and lilies of France.

If his lady's fair favour he sought to implore
 By a witty ballade or a sad sereenade
 Did he write it ? Not he, when a troubadour
 Was willing to sing all the day if paid

In a bower of bloom or a vine arcade,
Or to sigh all night in the moonbeam's dance,
While he dreamed of rampart and escalade ;
But dead are the legends and lilies of France.

The Cathedral still stands with its fine façade ;
Some old stones of the rampart remain by chance ;
There are diplomats, dances, and gasconade—
But dead are the legends and lilies of France.

HAWTHORN SPRAY.

After the early spring's dissolving powers
Had eased the earth of winter's icy weight,
I went into the woods with soul elate
To watch the coming of the first-born flowers ;
Fair Flora soon began to build her bowers
Of leaf and bloom in forms both small and great,
The trees put forth their canopies of state,
And from the ground sprang up between the hours
Most beauteous blossoms in a glorious band
Of perfect shapes and colors richly blent,
And all my soul was fill'd with glad content ;
But one pink hawthorn in a far-off land
Sent all my thoughts like birds on eager wing
Back to the beauty of Old England's spring.

IF I WERE KING.

If I were King of some great land
 With lords and commons to command,
 My crown should be with justice bright
 Instead of jewels—and Love's light
 Should be the sceptre in my hand.

One law of virtue should be planned
 That all alike might understand
 The simple rule, that right is right—
 If I were King.

One Church should stand in God's own sight
 Where all who wished to worship, might,
 Its ministers should be a band
 Of soldiers with a purpose grand
 To put all evil thoughts to flight,
 If I were King.

WORLD, WIND, LEAVES AND SNOW

World.

Grey wind of the North ! with thy burden so chill,
 (Oh ! for the blast and the blowing,)
 Why flyest thou fast over river and rill,
 Adown the deep valley and up the steep hill,
 (Alas ! for the storms that are sowing.)
 Through gloom-spreading forest, bare meadow, bleak moor,
 Above the sea-surges, along the sea shore,
 O ! whither, grey wind, art thou going ?

Wind.

The corpse of my lover my arms do enfold,
 (Oh ! for the roar and the rattle.)
 Whose beauty was rarer and fairer than gold,
 Whose joys were bright jewels, unbought and unsold,
 (Alas ! for the fear-stricken cattle.)
 And I chant in thine ear the sad dirge of the dead,
 For the summer is slain and the winter so dread
 Is hastening to offer thee battle.

World.

Sere leaves of the autumn, resplendent and bright,
 (Oh ! for the frost and the fading.)
 Why fall ye so thickly by day and by night,
 With raining of color that dazzles the sight,
 (Alas ! for the winter's invading.)
 Till heaped on my bosom like relics of love
 Ye lie, sad remembrancers, sorrow to move
 My spirit with woe overlading.

Leaves.

We thought to have woven a garment of grace,
 (Oh ! for the moon and the veiling.)
 Embroidered with beauties bright fancy should trace,
 But, alas ! we have gazed on his death-stricken face,
 (Alas ! for the heavens are paling.)
 And the robe of our fancy is changed to a pall
 And the garlands that lately did crown him must fall ;
 Love's labor is all unavailing.

World.

Pale snow, with a touch that is light as the air,
 (Oh ! for sky's cloud and earth's cover.)
 Why weighest thou down on my heart filled with care,
 On my soul with its anguish too heavy to bear.
 (Alas ! for the end when 'tis over.)
 In thy mantle of gauze why hid'st thou mine eyes,
 That would look at fond love e'er forever love lies
 In the grave of my newly-slain lover.

Snow.

I cover thy face lest the sight of thy dead,
 (Oh ! for love, sacred and splendid.)
 Should strike in thy soul its unnameable dread,
 For sympathy now and forever is fled,
 (Alas ! for lost love, undefended.)
 And I wrap up thy breast with the warmth of my heart,
 Which shall stay till the spring breaks and bids me depart,
 When the time of thy mourning is ended.

ROSE.

Know you whence the roses came ?

Roses are the queen of flowers ;

Rose is my beloved's name.

All my heart was set aflame

As we walked through Cupid's bowers ;

Know you whence the roses came ?

Is it sweetness—is it shame—

When the sunshine's spoiled by showers ?

Rose is my beloved's name.

Duty sits a stern old dame

On a throne of ruined towers ;

Know you whence the roses came ?

Youth must live and who shall blame

If with love it pass the hours ?

Rose is my beloved's name.

Life and love is all a game,

Shine and shadow—gleams and glowers—

Know you whence the roses came ?

Rose is my beloved's name.

A SEA DREAM.

My spirit wandered by the ocean shore ;
Proud argosies sailed out to Albion's isle
Deep-laden with a new world's golden store,
The sun-kissed waves danced lightly, Nature's smile
Suffused o'er all the scene sweet loveliness awhile.

Light silver veils, like tender thoughts outspread,
When dreaming lovers taste supernal joy,
Floated around Heaven's azure bridal bed
In listless splendour ; others did convoy
Earth's treasures o'er the deep that plotted to destroy.

There rose as from the sea a strange mirage
Out of the past ; the clouds like floating drapes
Each moment changed, and ocean's long rivage
Was wreathed by magic in a thousand shapes,
Now gemmed with flashing isles, now girt with solemn capes.

And all the cities that have loved the sea
To their destruction, passed along the sky,
And I beheld them, as the drowning see,
In that last moment when they sink to die,
All life's forgotten scenes unrolled by memory.

Time-honoured Greece, whose fingers clutched the wave
And clasped it to a heart that beats no more,
Sank with her wisdom in a silent grave,
Leaving her sons a splendour to deplore
While moans the tideless sea around each classic shore.

Rich Carthage, whose swift keels swam round the world,
Phœnicia's loveliest daughter. Her fair hand
Was fought for by the nations ; Fate hath hurled,
Her and her glory from their sea-throne grand,
Buried like some old palm beneath the burning sand.

Great Venice stood amid the nuptials gay
Blessing as bride the fair but fickle sea ;
But all her pride and pomp have passed away,
Dukes, doge, ships, senate, riches, sovereignty,
That once compelled the world to fall on bended knee.

Imperial Rome, set like a lustrous gem
Within seven guardian jewels ! Tyrant Time
Stole from her thoughtful brow its diadem
And the three wreaths that crowned her all-sublime,
Stained though their golden leaves with many a bloody crime.

Proud Spain ! once mistress of the sea, before
The fool Ambition led her ships in vain
Against the bulwarks of old England's shore,
When God smote down her pride upon the main
And sank her power so low, it never rose again.

Then fell a mist before my wondering sight
Over the past, and slowly there arose
Our blessèd Britain in her glorious might,
The awe and admiration of her foes,
Whose land of liberty protecting seas enclose.

The diamond of nations, set in gold,
Flashing with truth that sparkles o'er the earth,
Compared to her what empery of old
Hath wrought for suffering man such deeds of worth,
Or filled with living light dark lands of ageless dearth?

THE BLACK KNIGHT.

To King Banalin's court there came
 From divers lands beyond the sea
 A score of knights, with hearts aflame
 With love for lady Ursalie,
 Whose wondrous beauty and fair fame
 Were sung by Europe's minstrelsy.

Each lord in retinue did bring
 A noble and a princely band,
 Whose deeds the troubadours did sing
 Through length and breadth of Christian land,
 And each by turn besought the King
 The favour of his daughter's hand.

But spake the King to each brave lord,
 "When first the sun shall shine in May
 A tourney in the palace-yard
 We do appoint, and on that day
 Who holds his own with spear and sword
 Shall take our daughter fair away."

Whereat the Lady Ursalie

Blanched as a lily of the vale,
 For many moons had waned since she
 First pledged her love to Sir Verale,
 And for that sick to death was he
 Her trembling lips turned ashen pale.

The heavy scent of musk and myrrh
 Hung all about the inner room,
 Dim taper lights did faintly stir
 To life the arras through the gloom,—
 She bade her handmaid bring to her
 The treasure-box that held her doom.

With lightest touch a secret spring
 Upraised the silver casket's lid ;
 She took therefrom a golden ring,
 A broken coin, a heart hair-thrid,
 And many a sweet and precious thing
 Wherein her plighted troth was hid.

“Then welcome death, if death it prove,”

She said and kissed with lips still pale
 Each sweet remembrance of his love ;—

“I will not fail thee, Sir Verale,
 Though from thy couch thou canst not move
 To don for me thy coat of mail.”

Unto the chapel straight she went
 And knelt before the altar-stone ;
 Her face within her hands she bent
 Praying with many a tear and moan
 Until the day was well-nigh spent,
 When came a beadsman she had known ;

“ O ! Father ! join thy prayer with mine
 The life of Sir Verale to save ;
 O ! plead then at our Lady’s shrine
 For health to one so young and brave.
 For I will wed, with help divine,
 No other lord this side the grave.”

The holy friar knelt him there
 And crossed him, and began to tell
 His beads, each counted for a prayer,
 Until the sound of vesper-bell
 Stole through the darkling twilight air
 And warned them of the day’s farewell.

Each day at morn and noon and night
 Her trusted handmaid she did send
 To learn if her beloved knight
 In life’s estate was like to mend,
 And on the eve of April’s flight
 This message came her heart to rend.

"Tell thou my lady fair," he said,
 To her who bore the answer back,
 "To-morrow will I leave this bed
 And wear my suit of armour black ;
 To-morrow will I win and wed
 Or lose both love and life, alack."

The Lady Ursalie knew well
 He could not rise, so ill he was,
 And shuddered as her maid did tell
 His dying state, then forth did pass
 Unto the chapel, as the bell
 Proclaimed the holy evening mass.

The morrow broke with golden rush
 And chased the gloom of night away ;
 The pipe of blackbird, song of thrush,
 Rose with the skylark's roundelay,
 The wild flowers started with a blush
 To meet the first bright morn of May.

The palace-yard was all prepared ;
 Bright-hued pavilions stood around,
 The banners waved, the armour glared,
 The eager steeds tore up the ground,
 And twenty princes who had dared
 The tourney in the lists were found.

The King and Queen on dais'd throne
 Received each knight on bended knee ;
 But like an image carved in stone
 Sat lovely Lady Ursalie
 And none who saw her would have known
 For her the tourney was to be.

But one there knelt in sable mail
 Of whom the King in accents rude,
 Did ask his name, and why this bale
 Of armour black, he did intrude ;
 He answered : " I am Sir Verale,
 Long months thy daughter have I wooed.

And by this sable suit I wear,
 This sterling blade of Spanish steel,
 This iron shield and trusty spear,—
 But chiefly by the love I feel,
 I ask to wife thy daughter fair
 And that, proud King, is why I kneel."

When Lady Ursalie that voice
 Did hear, her heart beat high with fears,
 Her troubled soul did half rejoice
 And memory filled her eyes with tears ;
 But as she smiled upon her choice
 There fell a clash of shields and spears.

Knight after knight was overthrown,
Some ready for the bier and shroud,
At last the black knight stood alone—
And in the air applause rang loud
As proudly strode he to the throne
Pursued by all the noble crowd.

Then cried the King : “ Right nobly won,
Most puissant, worthy Sir Verale,
I would the words were well undone
That erst in anger I did rail.”

The knight replied, “ Words injure none,
And after-grief doth not avail.

And now, O King, thou soon shalt wis
Thy daughter is forever mine,
And when thy loving liegemen miss
Both thee and all thou callest thine,
They shall recall the Black Knight’s kiss
And know that love hath power divine.”

Then at the Lady Ursalie
The Black Knight looked and she arose.
But what strange visage she did see
That his raised vizor did disclose—
Is still an awful mystery
Which only that dead lady knows.

For when her eyes of lustre rare
Gazed there, where none could see a face,
A flash of lightning rent the air ;
And, passing in a moment's space,
The Black Knight was no longer there
And of his steed there was no trace.

All looked at Lady Ursalie,
Who blushed with love like any bride :
" No power can take my soul from thee,
" I come, I come," she faintly cried,
And swooned in arms held hastily
And smiling closed her eyes and died.

But who the Black Knight was none knew,
Though one said who had second sight,
He watched a raven as it flew
In circles slow and did alight
Upon the tourney ground and grew
Into a sable horse and knight.

By some, it is believed and said,
That Sir Verale gave one deep sigh
And turned himself on his sick bed
And muttered a low welcome cry,
And ere the watchers knew, was dead,
As his dear lady's soul passed by.

THE GOLDEN LINE.

As each small ripple of the mighty sea
Reflects a tiny image of the sun
Until in radiance joining one by one,
They do present a path of brilliancy ;
In this broad stripe of gold that comes to me
From the horizon, as though God had spun
A thread of golden thought for me alone,
Out of His universal mystery—
So from the mirror of each human soul
Shall flash the radiance of God's great love
Which ever shineth on us from above
Until Love's splendour lighteth up life's whole,
And man shall look on man, and soul through soul behold
One flaming line of Truth, God's pure and shining gold.

SWEET OF MY LIFE.

Love is to life as perfume to the rose,
A sweet unseen enjoyment that doth lend
Rapture to beauty—so doth Nature send
The harmony of happiness that flows
Half-way between hot Passion's leaps and throes
And Apathy, where worn-out feelings end,
Throughout the universe, there doth attend
Upon all active ordering, repose.
O Thou ! the fair embodiment of good,
Who first within me struck the chord of Love,
Necessity of Life ! in thee doth move
The pure quintessence of pure womanhood,
Without thy love my life would be as bare
As fairest rose without its perfume rare.

HASTINGS.

The Saxons fought hard in the fatal fray,
O ! sing of the battle on Hasting's shore,
When the arrows of Normandy won the day.

Flushed by debauch at the break of day,
Their keen-edged axes athirst for gore,
The Saxons fought hard in the fatal fray.

Proud soldiers fell down on their knees to pray,
Lord ! yield us the victory, we implore ;
When the arrows of Normandy won the day.

King Harold, whose heart never felt dismay,
Spake loud of the deeds they had done before ;
The Saxons fought hard in the fatal fray.

Taillefer the jongleur, sang well his lay
And laughed as he flung up the lance he bore,
When the arrows of Normandy won the day.

Duke William in England proclaimed his sway ;
King Harold lay dead ; the battle was o'er ;
The Saxons fought hard in the fatal fray,
But the arrows of Normandy won the day.

SHELLEY.

A bird of song, far soaring to its home,
Over the sea-waves cleaves with tireless wing
The cloudless blue ; but, swiftly gathering,
A storm breaks up the crystal into foam
That dashes mountain-high 'gainst Heaven's dome
Now darkened. Down the aerial harpies fling
The sweet-voiced minstrel and sad surges sing
The dirge of death with sorrow burdensome.
O Heart of Hearts ! high-beating o'er the world
From whom fell sweetest song that unto man
Told love and life, since life and love began ;
Like some lone bird thou wert by Nature hurled
Into the restless jaws of death's devouring sea
With still a Song of Songs to bear thee company.

MORNING.

The gray of dawn, peeps up behind night's folds,
While darkling clouds yet dim the distant sky ;
Long miles of mist disperse along the wolds,
And from the dewy boughs the songsters fly.

The feathered minstrels of the opening day,
Refreshed by long and undisturbed repose,
Arrange the plumes that night has turned astray,
And all their ruffled beauties now disclose.

The late, lone bat, like some lost refugee,
Seeks dark security from pressing morn,
And scatters, as it hides in hollow tree,
Bright butterflies that soon the scene adorn.

The busy ants from their great hills descend
In careful haste, and cross the grassy plain,
Saluting silently each passing friend,
But disregarding strangers with disdain.

The lumbering beetle, lazy and begrimed,
 With laggard steps begins the dreary day,
After the toiling snail hath long beslimed
 His burdened march upon the open way.

Along its silken threads the spider walks,
 And shakes the hanging dew-drop to the ground ;
No chance entanglement his duty balks,
 As patiently he treads each subtle round.

Forth from the little door of his domain
 The gentle bee, armed with industrious powers,
Seeks treasure-trove, and soon returns again,
 Weighed with the honey of a hundred flowers.

Within the wood the dove begins to coo,
 Telling, with swelling breast, his gentler mate
How he has sought her presence but to sue,
 And all day long her love will supplicate.

Out of the root-roofed archway of yon beech,
 The natural portal of his spacious cell,
The nut-brown squirrel doth his neck far reach,
 To spy if all is safe within the dell.

The marigolds unfold their yellow heads,
That vie in colour with the saffron sun ;
The violets stretch within their scented beds,
And raise their beauteous faces, one by one.

Along the meadow land the daisies pied
Proclaim their presence to the pearl-laid grass ;
The morning-glories, in their prudish pride,
Ope wide their eyes, to gaze in nature's glass.

And whilst within the parsonage dull sleep
Still holds the inmates with mesmeric power,
The martins one unending circle keep,
In morning service round the old church tower.

The robin, rosy from his early bath,
With quaint conceit, which unto him belongs,
Hops, uninvited, down the garden path
And breaks the silence with his tuneless songs.

Whereat the watch-dog rousing from his sloth,
Chases the bold invader far away,
And, careless though the chanticleer be wroth,
With joyful bark proclaims the break of day.

LOVE'S VOICE.

As little streams that start to find the sea
Proclaim with babbling tongues their voyaging
And with proud riot make the meadows ring,
Or fill the wild woods with much noisy glee,
As of their course they tell each waving tree
And wandering bird that chances near to wing ;
So shallow lovers in the world's ear sing
Their plaint of passion with vain minstrelsy.
But vast as restless ocean's deep expanse,
Superbly splendid, solemnly sublime,
Whose music beats upon the shore of time
In rhythmic beauty, is my heart's romance :
But as no song can sound the mighty sea,
My soul is silent in its love for thee.

LILIES AND POPPIES.

White lilies languish on their graceful stems,
Red poppies laugh amid the growing corn ;
Lilies at poppies look with lofty scorn
And cherish dear their own chaste diadems ;
Poppies at lilies scoff, their scarlet gems
Blaze in the splendor of a life, love-born
And love-begetting, and do most adorn
Those whom love's beauty unto death condemns.
Lay the white blossoms on the lowly bier
Of her who passed away, so pure and young,—
Fling the red passion-poisoned flowers among
Her syren-sisters who live sinning here.
O ! star-souled lily ! white for none to blame.
O ! blood-stained poppy ! red with blush of shame.

TO BACCHUS.

The poet sings in love-sick verse
 Plaints thy goblets soon disperse ;
 Pluck the willow from his head,
 'Twine the vine-leaf in its stead,
 Fill the bowl with drink divine,
 Give the wounded minstrel wine ;
 And the fool now fraught with pain,
 Ne'er shall weep for love again.
 See ! it scarcely stains his lips,
 Yet to draughts have turned his sips.
 Subtle raptures swiftly fill
 Every vein with fiery thrill ;
 Long before its rage is o'er
 Pants the reeling wretch for more ;
 Squeeze the grape, fill high the bowl,
 Wine shall cheer the wounded soul.
 Let the ruddy torrent flow,
 Heal all wounded hearts below,
 Freely let the red stream pour,
 With its storm the blood shall roar ;
 Surges of mad ecstasy
 Shall embroil life's phantasy ;
 Clouds of joy before the brain
 Dull the deeper sense of pain.
 Love is great ; but in life's dream
 Wine alone shall reign supreme ;
 To old Bacchus ! drink and sing ;
 Cupid's Victor ! Pleasure's King !

LOVE'S WHISPERS.

I hear soft breathings in the gentle breeze,
 Though whence or how they spring I cannot tell.
 They whisper on the hill and in the dell,
Along the streamlets and among the trees ;
Like the sweet humming of a thousand bees
 In harmony, as if some magic spell
 Fashioned the dew to music as it fell,
Like merry mermaids, chanting 'neath the seas,
Or fairy chorus in a moon-lit grove,
 Or band of nightingales, each to its rose
 Trilling of love when all things else repose.
Such sweet sounds haunt me wheresoe'er I rove
 Shaping themselves to words that sing to me,
 " Happy art thou of men, thy loved one loves but thee ! "

WORK.

Work ! use all thy will, give all thy might,
Ply all thy strength,
Until the golden dawn of early light
Shall change at length
Into deep purple shades, soft, pure and bright,
That bring glad tidings of the peaceful night.

Work ! while the subtle seasons onward roll
In certain course,
The ways of this frail world to help control ;
That keen remorse
In life's last moment—'ere thy deeds unroll
May strike no sudden anguish to thy soul.

Work ! taking lessons from the mighty Past,
What men have done ;
Yet let not those old masters hold thee fast,
They have begun ;
What later souls must finish. They have cast
The first stones at earth's evil—not the last.

Work ! but seek not false Ambition's flame
 To light thee on ;
Not so the men of wisdom ever came
 In days long gone ;
No sordid dream,—no bare desire for Fame
Has left on Memory's lips one worthy name.

Work ! in the hope of sowing seedlings great ;
 Let others reap,—
That, when stern Nature bids thy step abate,
 Thy body sleep,
Thy soul shall tremble not at Death's dark gate,
But calm and sure shall meet its After-Fate.

WHERE BLUE BELLS NOD.

Where blue-bells nod beneath the trees
And violets scent the summer breeze
I love to lie the whole day long
And listen to the wild bird's song,
While bees hum in their harmonies.

Proud wealth can buy its days of ease,
But not made up of hours like these ;
To none doth rank or fame belong
Where blue-bells nod.

In vain the arts may strive to please
The sense with novel images ;
For me, this sweet, cool fern among,
All Nature's right, all Art is wrong ;
Ah ! leave me with my birds and bees,
Where blue-bells nod.

LOSS AND GAIN.

Since thou hast come the world and I have parted,
Like chance-met friends whom love has never chained,
Away it spins, mad-brained and merry-hearted,
While I count o'er what I have lost and gained.
My losses are the breath of idle greeting,
The siren-song of pleasure, folly's laugh,
Wealth's patron smile, the pedant's wit most fleeting,
And all that goes to make youth's epitaph.
My gain is thee, who hath removed my blindness,
Torn off the mask of sin, stript shame's disguise,
Shown me man's frailty, taught me gold's unkindness,
And made a very heaven beneath the skies.
So do I feel like one from dreams awaking
Who laughs at night and all its foolish making,

TRIO.

FOUNDED ON A WELL KNOWN PASSAGE OF DANTE.

I.

Do you remember, dear, the day we sat
And read together from an old love-book
Alone in that sweet, calm, sequestered nook
Which Nature made for souls to marvel at?
Beneath us stretched a soft and shining mat
Of velvet verdure; leaves and blossoms shook
As songsters all their melodies forsook
To hear a legend from Love's laureate
We knew no fear, for there was no one by,
The stream seemed in its ripple to repeat
That tale of Lancelot, so sadly sweet,
Whom love enthralled in endless slavery.
Ah, me! there is no greater grief than when we feel
The thought of happier days o'er present sorrows steal.

II.

When from your lips the words fell on mine ear
Full many a thought our souls together drew
In sympathy, that with the story grew
Still more intense, and oh ! so wondrous near.
Our eyes were dimmed by Love's all-pitying tear
And from our cheeks the blushing colour flew
As if ashamed of its divulgent hue ;—
How well we understood the story, dear !
The blue vault overhead bore not a cloud
Upon its surface ; on our sky of love
Not e'en the shadow of a sigh did move,
Where now the soul-storm rages long and loud.
Ah, me ! there is no greater grief than when we feel
The thought of happier days o'er present sorrows steal.

III.

But one sweet passage from the book you read
The o'ergrown bud of love contrived to burst,
And all the beauty it had warmly nursed
Broke in our trembling hearts and blossomèd.
Youth's long-fought fire our unloosed fancies fed ;
Our souls felt Love's unsatiable thirst ;
O ! happiest moment then, but now the worst,
When life's blue sky grew all aflame with red !
But when you told how that long looked for smile
Was kissed by noble Lancelot, then—then—
You kissed my quivering lips ; nor read again ;
And bliss eternal breathed in us awhile.
Ah, me ! there is no greater grief than when we feel
The thought of happier days o'er present sorrows steal.


DE SENECTUTE.

Ninety years forever fled
Seem but ninety minutes past,
As I, waiting for the last,
Live alone among the dead.

Musing in the gloom and glow,
Lo! I see a ghostly train,
Spectres conjured by the brain,
Images of long ago.

From the soul rise strangled cries,
Death-groans from the sins it wrought ;
From the mind spring buried thought,
Poisoned hopes, vain sympathies.

In a weird, phantasmal band,
Seen as though in life's eclipse,
Perished women kiss my lips,
Dead men take me by the hand.



Infant figures glad with glee,
Cluster in unbidden band,
Clasp my old and palsied hand
Pulsing high with memory.

Pass light fingers through my hair,
Once like their's all tangled gold,
Silvery now and thin and old,
Bleached with age and blanched with care.

Softly touch my parchment skin,
Laugh and touch again and ask
That I throw aside time's mask,
Dull with years and dark with sin.

Look into my dim, dead eyes,
Dimmer now with tears, that start
From the little left of heart
That to those dear souls outflies.

Crowds of spirit-children pass,
Faces, lost long years ago,
Buds, soon buried in the snow,
Playmates—comrades in the class.

Chide me for my childish tears,
Bid me join the childish game,
Call me by a childish name
None have named for scores of years.

Youths, high-souled, with aims that age
Neither blighted nor betrayed,
Look with truth-lit eyes that made
Noble life's short pilgrimage.

Friends whose friendship now I crave,
Hearts whose love I yet would feel,
One by one before me steal,
In and out my living grave.

All things I have seen and known,
Read in book and dreamed in dream,
Stand as true as they did seem
When I claimed them for my own.

I have tried the truth of life,
Kissed love's lips till they grew cold,
Drained the cup and clutched the gold,
Mingled in the human strife.

Seen men come and go like leaves
Through the falls of many years,
Joined their laughter, shared their tears,
In the plot the great God weaves.

Ninety years forever fled,
Seem but ninety minutes past,
And I, waiting for the last,
Live alone among the dead.

THE COMING OF SUMMER.

Grim Winter rose and girded on his sword
To battle with the world. At each swift blow
The wind hissed cold, and at the sound abhorred
Birds ceased their singing and the river's flow
Stayed in its course, the sun's warm glow
Reached not the flowers through the air's dark frown,
The last leaves perished, and the crystal snow
Paled the soft bosom of the earth so brown
And all her pulsing life was frozen down.

Within Time's wondrous palace of past years
Nature sat grieving on her ancient throne ;
Her furrowed cheeks were wet with scalding tears,
And from her wrinkled mouth 'scaped many a moan ;
For she was brooding on delights long flown,
When all was bright and happy and the land
Flourished in fruitfulness, and there was known
No sign of sorrow, ere stern Winter's hand
Gave right of spoil to all his ruthless band.

“ Ah me ! ” she cried aloud in accents sad,
“ That ever son of Time should work such woe,
And he of all the offspring I have had,
The eldest, unto whom my love did go
Like streams that meadow margins overflow
With rainy surfeit for the thirsty earth ;
Whom I had hoped from childhood would upgrow
Rich in high thought, bold deed and noble worth,
And yet Woe’s curse fell on him from his birth.”

In simple beauty Spring knelt gently down,
Kissed the sad tears from Nature’s care-worn face,
Smoothed from her thoughtful brow each troublous frown
With tender hands, that left of pain no trace,
And then upstood in modest maiden grace,
Saying : “ Behold ! mine hour hath come to me ;
I go to make my love a resting-place
Against his coming from beyond the sea—
A throne most fitting for his sovereignty.”

So Spring walked forth into the icy cold,
And as her first soft footfall touched the earth,
A joyous thrill on everything took hold,
And from the spot a snowdrop white had birth ;
Then a bold robin piped across the dearth
Of frozen land a loud defiant sound ;
Then Winter knew his power was little worth,
And sped him forth to higher vantage ground,
With all his yelling rout fast flying round.

The birds set up a chorus of glad song,
Watching their nests among the shady trees ;
Insects in quick innumerable throng
Made live the earth and air ; gold-laden bees
Scorned the fine butterflies that flew at ease
Among the blossomed beauties of the fields ;
The strong young leaves defied the assaulting breeze,
Spreading the brightness of their verdant shields
To guard the nurseling fruit that Autumn yields.

Where the thin moonbeams cast their joys along
A verdured vale of rapturous delight
Spring caught the echoes of the herald's song,
And saw the flowerets in the dead of night
Lift up their watchful faces, glad and bright,
And heard the birds soft singing through the shade,
Singing for Summer and the morning light ;
Then sank her soul within her, and afraid,
She watched the circuit that the fast moon made.

As Death, unseen, poised high his vengeful dart,
And Nature knelt beside Spring's fallen form,
Night's outer curtain 'gan to wave and part
Before the sun's first breath, so bright and warm ;
The diamond dew to rainbows did transform,
The flowers raised up their heads to their full height,
The breeze bore on its wings a music storm
As every bird sang forth in full delight
And loudest strain the sighings of the night.

And Spring, revived a little, moved her head,
And to her mother said, in accents mild :
“ Before he comes, alas ! I may be dead.
O hasten to him, mother, for thy child,
And give him this, I plucked it in the wild,
And tell him ere King Death his mantle throws
I would he kissed my lips, and on me smiled.
O haste thee, mother mine ! take this white rose,
And bid him come my dying eyes to close.”

With her last word the golden door swung free,
A blaze of sunshine scattered all the gloom,
Sweet music rolled in a voluptuous sea,
The radiant air was filled with scent and bloom,
And Summer stood, the bravest-hearted groom
That ever bride had waited for and won ;
But Spring lay like an image on a tomb,
Her too-short pilgrimage already done,
Her blue eyes closed, her latest breath begun :

And as her soul forsook its frail abode,
Golden-haired Summer, with a cry of pain,
Across the threshold of Time's palace strode,
With tears that fell in showers like to rain,
Calling on Spring to come to life again.
But tears could not disturb her last repose,
And all the calling of his heart was vain.
Summer still thinks of Spring—his grief he shows,
When golden raindrops fall upon the rose.

RONDEL.

God's wisdom all my spirit fills
 With faith that puts to flight all doubt,
 The snow dissolving into rills
 Refreshing earth from last year's drought
 Adown the peeping slopes of hills
 Carve their increasing channels out,
 God's wisdom all my spirit fills
 With faith that puts to flight all doubt.

The day that stirs, the night that stills ;
 Spring's masque of flowers ; rich summer's rout ;
 Each wonder, far past finding out,
 With joy and love my bosom thrills ;
 God's wisdom all my spirit fills
 With faith that puts to flight all doubt.

THE ABBEY WALLS.

This was the Abbey long years ago
When a priest was pious, a lord was brave
And a lady repeated her Ave slow
With fair eyes fixed on the architrave
As she heard a sanctified voice that clave
The clear bright air with a holy strain :
All have been lost in Time's great wave—
Only the old grey walls remain.

One arch still stands of all the row
That circled the Abbey so tall and brave,
These flags as legend would have us know,
Are the very stones that used to pave
The cloister-walk, when a proud margrave
Heard from his hiding a love-talk plain
Which he never forgot and never forgave,
Only the old grey walls remain.

Here where the nettle and nightshade grow
By a nameless stone, is the quiet grave
Of a murdered priest ;—they laid him low
Under the walk of the quiet nave.
'Tis whispered alas ! that a dagger gave
A stab to the heart that brought no pain ;
Of all the story that Time could save
Only the old grey stones remain.

ENVOI.

Ballade ! To that dead lady go
Say Love still sings its sad refrain ;
Of its lofty hope and sunny glow
Only its old grey walls remain.

THE VIOLET.

Born in the night and christened with the dew,
The violet lifts its face for morning's kiss ;
And each fair petal, filled with Nature's bliss,
Weaves from the sunshine a sweet robe of blue.
The birds look down and wonder how it grew,
For yesterday the leaves where now it is
Lay green i' the grass, and nought was like to this,
Earth's earliest counterfeit of Heaven's hue.
The shy hepatica ; the showdrop white ;
The trebly mounted trillium ; the blaze
Of golden daffodil with sunny rays—
Have all arisen in their beauty bright ;
But none of Flora's first-born can compare,
With this blue-blossomed darling of the air.

LA FARFALLA.

Bright little butterfly, mounting at morning
 Over Love's garden of sweet delight,
 Heedless of harm and the honey-bee's warning,
 Bent upon pleasure, in pains despite.
 Gaily thou flutterest, gaudily flaunting
 All thy fair charms to the winds that kiss
 Like a soul in elysian happiness haunting
 New meadows of bliss.

When the first grey beam of the dawn uplifting
 Shadows of sleep from a world of dreams,
 From sea-marge to mountain and meadow-land drifting,
 Lighted at last on thy wings' bright gleams
 Kissed thee and waked thee and whispered thee hasten
 To herald the sun where it might not smite
 In the deeps of dark dells where white flowers wasten
 And languish for light.

Thou hast bathed in the sun-flashing spray that arises
 From ripples that laugh on the brook's fair face,
 Thou hast gazed in the mirror that Nature devises
 For Beauty's delight in her own sweet grace,
 Thou hast basked in the heat of the noon-tide splendour
 When cricket piped high in the grass beneath,
 And the blossoms that carried thy burden so tender
 Were crowned with a wreath.

The lily grew pale for thou passed its perfection,
 The violet bowed in a passion of grief,
 The daisy had hope of thy gracious election,
 The blue-bell despaired of its heart's relief,
 The hyacinth spread all its beauties before thee,
 The marjoram blushed as it caught thine eye,
 The mignonette flung its sweet fragrance o'er thee--
 But thou passed them by.

Light was thy heart and the pleasures thou scattered
Were pure as the flowers on which they fell,
Till the red rose sought thee and caught thee and flattered,
With promise of love thou hast known too well.
All the long hours till the low sun glamour'd
The bright blushing petals to kiss and to toy,
Thou paused in thy flight, for thy heart enamour'd
Drank deeply of joy.

The blossoms that drooped in the dark and were sighing
For tidings of light thou wert bidden to tell
Lay down in despair, dreading death, and yet dying
And great was the grief in deeps of the dell,
For thou hadst forgotten the message of morning
And the work of the day thou wast given to do,
For the love of the rose and the honey-bee's scorning
For thy love was true.

Poor little butterfly ! dying so sadly
At the rise of the moon o'er the ripe-gold grain ;
Dost thou rue of the pleasure thou tasted so madly,
Would'st thou take back thy love to take life again ?
Ah, no ! Love is sweeter and meeter than duty,
And shall hold thee in joy till thy last breath beats,
Till thou liest at rest—a dead marvel of beauty
Surrounded by sweets.

COWPER.

A gentle stream purred on its peaceful way
Through woodlands fair and meadows wondrous sweet,
Chancing at length a cavern dark to meet
Within whose depth ne'er fell the light of day ;
Lo ! as it entered, heavenward flew the spray
All loth to pass beyond and backward beat,
As though the natural course it would defeat
That plunged it where the sun cast not a ray.
Through that lone cave of blackness on it sped,
Its happy music turned to mournful sigh,
Until it reached the end, when earth and sky
Shone doubly bright that seemed for so long dead ;—
Thus didst thou pass, sweet singer, through the gloom
Of life's dark hollow. Light came at the tomb.

RAIN.

Love only laughs when sunshine floods the air,
 When winds flute summer music through the trees,
 When nature's masquers are attired to please
And Flora holds gay gala everywhere ;
But now Heaven's brow is underknit with care,
 Low clouds burst forth a-weeping, flowery leas
 Are drowned with runnels and the ponds grow seas,
Leaves droop beneath the dripping loads they bear,
And silence reigns in each late lute-filled bough ;
The cricket chorus and the humming crowd
 That tell how labour lightens earth's hard way
Are all—all gone. Love hears no music now—
Only an endless falling, sharp and loud,
 The dreary rhythm of a rainy day.

HYMN.

When the calm of night is falling
And the cares of day are o'er,
Hear the voice of Jesus calling ;—
Go to Him and sin no more.

When the heart is sad and troubled
He alone can peace restore,
By his love is life ennobled ;—
Go to Him and sin no more.

When the soul in grief and anguish
Mourns the evil done before,
Let your faith no longer languish ;—
Go to Him and sin no more.

Go to Him ! for He can only
Soothe the pain and heal the sore,
All who are distressed and lonely ;—
Go to Him and sin no more.

Go to Him ! lay down your burden,
At His feet His love implore,
Ask in penitence for pardon ;—
Go to Him and sin no more.

Go to Him ! He hath invited
All to enter Heaven's door,
Sinners by His love united ;—
Go to Him and sin no more.

THE GREAT PLAY.

There is a playwright older than the years,
 Who maketh all men actors in his play,
 And, though they know not what they do or say,
The purpose of the plot in all appears.
Each in his turn, beset with inborn fears,
 Enters unseen, youth's comedy so gay,
 Laughs through the hours that glide too soon away
Beneath the clouds of soul-consuming tears.
Then manhood's tragedy with perils fraught,
 Pursues its fickle fortunes to the end,
 When Fate, the villain of the piece doth send
By whom the last exciting scene is wrought ;
 A timely stab from Death's sure-falling knife
 Brings down the curtain o'er the play of life.

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